

James Madison to William H. Crawford, September 23, 1816. Transcription: The Writings of James Madison, ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900-1910.

TO W. H. CRAWFORD. MAD. MSS.

Montpellier, Sepr. 23, 1816

Dear Sir I have just recd. from Mr. Monroe a very extraordinary communication, *confidentially* made to him by Col. Jessup. A copy of it is inclosed. An invasion by a Spanish force at the present period might be pronounced a mere chimoera, if a less degree of folly reigned at Madrid; unless, indeed the Councils of Spain shd. be supported by a power, whose councils may reasonably be more confided in. It is probable however that Onis is intriguing at N. Orleans, and the extent to which he may mislead, an ignorant proud & vindictive Govt. cannot be calculated. It is incumbent on us therefore to have an eye to our S. W. Frontier, proportioning our precautions to our means, and to a fair estimate of the danger. As Gen: Jackson is apprized of the apprehensions of Col. Jessup, tho' without some of the grounds of them mentioned to Mr. Monroe, we may expect soon to hear from him on the subject. Are there any reinforcements or defences, which can be added to those now within his employment? Should Jessup execute his purpose, it will be the boldest project, ever assumed by no higher authority. I communicate the intelligence he gives, to the Secy. of the Navy. Be so good as to do the same to your Colleagues at Washington.¹

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1 On September 27 Crawford informed Jackson of the reported intended Spanish invasion and on the same day asked the Secretary of the Navy to send a ship to the Gulf of Mexico to co-operate with the land forces.— *Mad. MSS.*